

Claims

1. An apparatus for managing purchases in progress which are made by a number of individuals belonging to a liable organisation, such as employees making purchases in parallel on behalf of a company, the apparatus comprising

5 a managing server (100) connected to a global interconnected network (105), such as the Internet, the server including a storage means (140) and issuing means (150),

10 a client terminal (130) connected to the network for providing information to the storage means of the server about purchasing rules for individuals purchasing on behalf of their organisation,

15 the issuing means adapted to generate a unique number, the number being issued and distributed to a purchasing individual, in dependence on the purchasing rules,

20 a first communication terminal (120) operated by a provider is adapted to, in response to a purchase, provide information to the managing server relating to a purchase in progress,

characterised in that

25 the server is adapted to examine whether information provided is in accordance with the purchasing rules, as a result of which a notification is sent to the first communication terminal so as to validate the purchase.

2. An apparatus for managing purchases according to claim 1, characterised in that

25 the issuing means is adapted to generate a unique number, the number being issued and distributed to a second communication terminal operated by a purchasing individual, in dependence on the purchasing rules.

3. An apparatus for managing purchases according to claim 1, characterised in that

the second communication terminal operated by a purchasing individual could be adapted, in response to a purchase, provide information to the managing server relating to a purchase in progress.

5 4. An apparatus for managing purchases according to claim 1, **characterised in that**

the client terminal is operated by the purchasing organisation.

10 5. An apparatus for managing purchases according to claim 1, **characterised in that**

as a result of the examination, the managing server sends a notification also to the purchasing organisation in addition to the notification to the first and/or second communication terminal.

15 6. An apparatus for managing purchases according to claim 1, **characterised in that**

the unique the number includes a logical part and a random part, the logical part including at least one of organisation, department, individual and serial number of issued numbers, and the random part being any four digit number.

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7. An apparatus for managing purchases according to claim 1, **characterised in that**

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the unique number is distributed to the second communication terminal either via a smart card or by printing the unique number on a purchasing coupon, preferably in the form of a bar code.

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8. An apparatus for managing purchases according to claim 1, **characterised in that**

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the information provided from the first and/or second communication

terminal to the managing server relating to a purchase includes the unique number and the cost of the purchase for reservation of the corresponding amount on a debiting account.

5 9. An apparatus for managing purchases according to claim 1, **characterised in that**

for valid purchase, the first and/or second communication terminal connects to an electronic invoicing service (175), which is adapted to execute invoicing in accordance with the specific requirements for payment of the purchasing organisation.

10 10. An apparatus for managing purchases according to claim 9, **characterised in that**

15 the electronic invoicing service is adapted to connect to the managing server for retrieval of specific routines stored thereon for invoicing relating to the purchasing organisation.

20 11. A method for managing purchases in progress which are made by a number of individuals belonging to a liable organisation, such as employees making purchases in parallel on behalf of a company, the method comprising the steps of:

25 connecting a managing server (100) to an global interconnected network (105), such as the Internet, the server including a storage means (140) and issuing means (150),

providing information to the storage means of the server about purchasing rules for individuals purchasing on behalf of their organisation which information is provided by a client terminal (130) connected to the network,

30 generating a unique number by the issuing means, the number being issued and distributed to a purchasing individual in dependence on the purchasing rules,

in response to a purchase, providing information to the managing server relating to a purchase in progress, by means of a first communication terminal (120) operated by a provider,

characterised in that

5 examining by the server whether information provided is in accordance with the purchasing rules, as a result of which a notification is sent to the first communication terminal so as to validate the purchase.

12. Computer program for causing a computerised apparatus to manage and audit purchases in progress which are made by a number of individuals belonging to a liable organisation, such as employees making purchases in parallel on behalf of a company, comprising a computer readable code, which when run causes the computerised apparatus to perform the method steps according to 10 claim 11.

15 13. Computer program product for causing a computerised apparatus to manage and audit purchases in progress which are made by a number of individuals belonging to a liable organisation, such as employees making purchases in parallel on behalf of a company, comprising

20 a computer readable medium, and

a computer program according to claim 11, the computer program being recorded on said computer readable medium.

25 14. Computer readable medium for causing a computerised apparatus to manage and audit purchases in progress which are made by a number of individuals belonging to a liable organisation, such as employees making purchases in parallel on behalf of a company, wherein

the computer readable medium is a propagated signal and the propagated signal is a carrier wave.